

Autism Diagnosis in Western Australia

What is an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), otherwise known as Autism, is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with, and relates to, other people. It also affects how they make sense of the world around them. The word 'spectrum' is used because, while other people with autism share certain difficulties, their condition will affect them in different ways.

Who is involved in ASD Assessments?

Western Australian standards recommend that an experienced multidisciplinary team carry out an assessment for Autism Spectrum Disorder for individuals. The individual's age determines which professionals are recommended in the assessment:

Children (up to 12yrs)	Adolescents (13-17yrs)	Adults (18yrs and over)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paediatrician, and • Speech Pathologist, and • Psychologist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paediatrician or Psychiatrist, and • Psychologist, and • Speech Pathologist (if required). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychiatrist, and • Psychologist (if required).

The requirements to see a team of professionals for the assessment depends on your intention to apply for government funded supports if a diagnosis is made. This should be discussed at the time when you book appointments with the diagnosticians, who can guide you as to which professionals need to be involved in the assessment. Once assessments have been completed, the professionals involved communicate their findings with other members of the assessment team and reach a joint decision regarding the most appropriate diagnosis for the individual.



Where to get a diagnosis

Your first step is to make an appointment with your GP who will then make the appropriate referrals. For children, the Paediatrician can refer a child to either the Department of Communities (Disability Services) or a local Child Development Service for a public assessment however there is usually a longer waiting period. Otherwise, families can choose to pursue a private assessment at a cost. For adults, assessments are conducted privately only.

For a list of private Autism assessors go to <https://waadf.org.au/paad/>

What is the cost of a diagnosis?

A diagnostic assessment conducted through the public system is currently provided at no cost to families. The cost of a private assessment(s) will depend on the fees set by the individual practitioners. Families/Individuals that choose to pursue a private assessment may be able to recover some costs through Medicare rebates.

What happens after a diagnosis?

When the diagnostic assessment has been completed, the assessment team will contact the family/individual to discuss their findings. Recommendations for interventions and support will be made relevant to the diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder or any other diagnosis that may be made. A decision will be made as to whether or not the person meets the criteria to be eligible for government funded services.

To find out more visit www.autism.org.au or call (08) 9489 8900